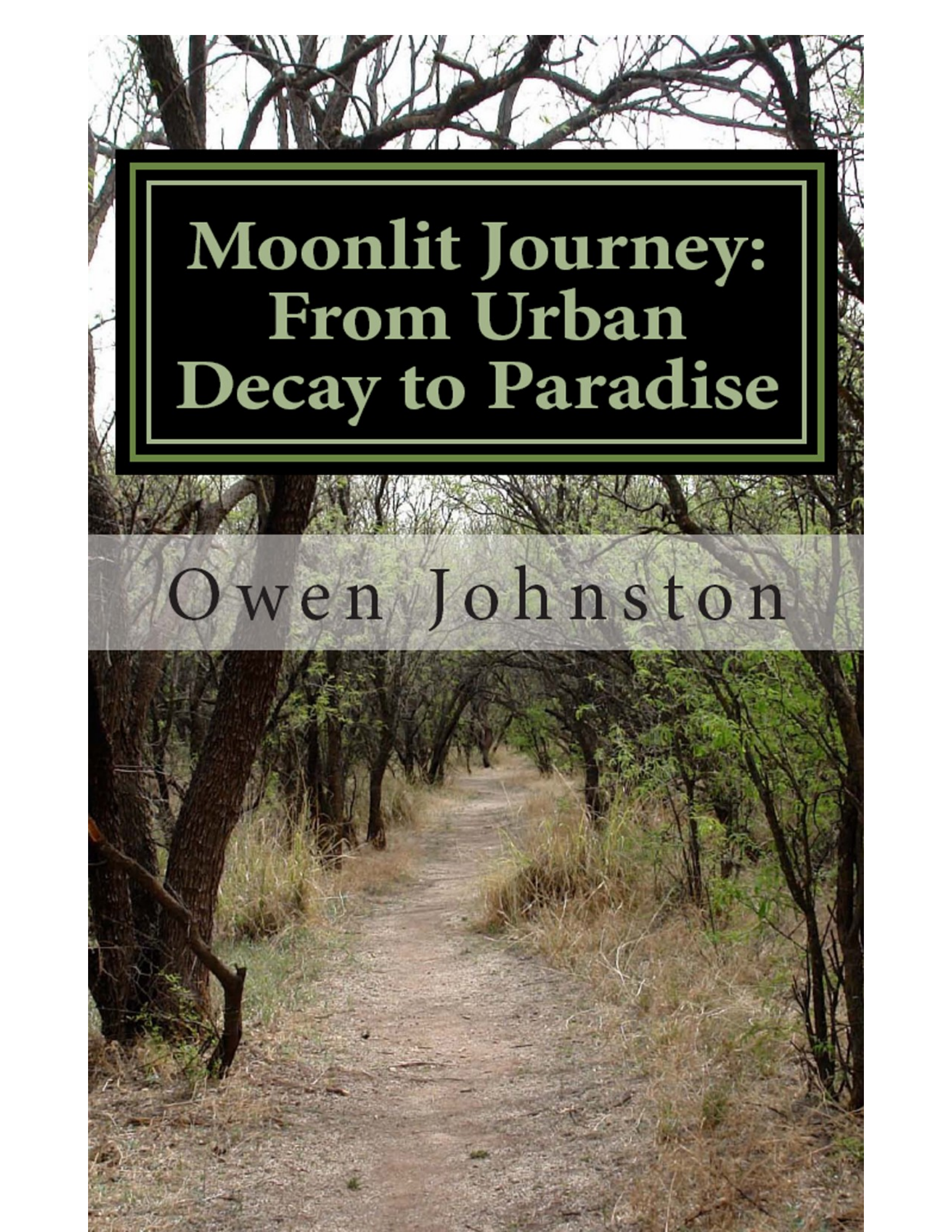


The background of the entire cover is a photograph of a dirt path that curves through a wooded area. The path is light brown and appears to be made of dirt and small stones. On either side of the path, there are trees with dark trunks and green foliage. The ground is covered with dry, yellowish-brown grass and some small green plants. The overall scene is peaceful and natural.

Moonlit Journey: From Urban Decay to Paradise

Owen Johnston

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"Moonlit Journey: A Poetic Quest from Urban Decay to Paradise"

Poetry and Poetic Prose

2nd Edition

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Illustrations by T.O.D. Johnston

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If you would like to own a beautiful, professionally bound and printed version of this book, please order a copy on Amazon:

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After reading this book, continue the journey through dimly lit places at the Moonlit Journey website.

<http://www.moonlitjourneypoetry.com>

Or, check out the random ramblings of a confused INFJ over at my personal blog.

<http://cyriades.webs.com>

About this book, Acknowledgements, and Dedication

Please join me on this quest through dark passages - yet there are rays of hope throughout as we seek paradise. First we must embark upon a gritty, dimly lit poetic journey through the dark hour, looking for the new dawn. Once we have found this new hope, we must stay true to the path and finish our quest. We ultimately find ourselves on a grim, fateful journey through the horrors of night, only to find tales of fantasy and hope at the end. The dark passages within this book contain a range of poetic and prosaic writing styles in one compilation that is thick with liminalism and imagery. A sample poem -

Farewell Party (Leaving the Old Church)

The ravens on the roof
Stand guard like gargoyles
These grim feathered ghouls
Perch atop the once proud passages
That they now pretend to own,
And sing a sad a cappella
In mockery of memory.

I want to acknowledge my father T.O.D. Johnston, my college creative writing professor Gregg Spivey, and Edgar Allan Poe as being the major influences on my writing style. Without them, this modest little book wouldn't be in your hands.

This book is dedicated to Jesus Christ my Savior, and all those who have helped me come this far, and all of my diligent students over the years. God bless.

"In the way of righteousness **is** life: and **in** the pathway **thereof** there **is** no death."
- Proverbs 13:28

Official trade paperback and Kindle editions

If you like this book enough after reading it, please consider purchasing it as a professionally bound and printed trade paperback book, and a Kindle E-Book. These editions both include illustrations by my father T.O.D. Johnston.

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And the angel that was sent unto me, whose name was Uriel, gave me an answer,

And said, Thy heart hath gone too far in this world, and thinkest thou to comprehend the way of the Most High?

Then said I, Yea, My Lord. And he answered me, and said, I am sent to shew thee three ways, and to set forth three similitudes before thee:

Whereof if thou canst declare me one, I will shew thee also the way that thou desirest to see, and I shall shew thee from whence the wicked heart cometh.

And I said, Tell on, My Lord. Then said he unto me, Go thy way, weigh me the weight of the fire, or measure me the blast of the wind, or call me again the day that is past.

- 2 Esdras 4:1-5

Poetic Foreword

Astral Pla(i)n(e)

I silently say farewell
To the shadows of earthly vale;
I seek to paint a vapor trail
Across the lunar sky
As destiny passes me by.

Book I:

A Dimly Lit Journey of Poetry through the
Dark Hour, looking for Dawn

O that the fleeting joys of life might last:
Too soon the future shall have been the past!
Would that the sands of time might be reversed,
And all the pleasant paths again traversed!

- Hugh Buckner Johnston,
In Retrospection

Book I - Part I:
Urban Decay

Urban Decay

Slowly descending
The spiral staircase
Into urban decay
On this night long journey -

Preceded by flashlight
And followed by the full moon,
Whose eyes hold us all in
His view as the street light
Flickers in and out in orange shades.

Spirit of the Past

The spirit of the past
Lives in
The whispers of the wind and
The hoot of the hoary owl,
Which echoes sadly evermore
Against the lonely trees -

Who for days uncounted have seen
The endless journeys of men
Come to an end beneath them -
This final respite
Marked by names and dates
On lonely tombs.

Ghost Hunting

There is a ghost in the shell
Of every old place -
Whether the unclaimed metal skeleton
Of an abandoned steel mill,
Or the spirit that lingers
On the grounds of a historic graveyard.
These ancient places carry
The immortal remnants
Of old civilization.

Exploring them to
Examine their secrets
Like an urban archaeologist -
Chasing down the answers
To urban legends and ghost stories -
Simply to know what came before.

Abandoned Factory

Once full of life, this old building -
Memories locked away under layers of dust.
Cigarette butts and broken beer bottles
Litter the lonely lot.

Once vital and active
In the world of mortal men,
Now immortal in its skeletal frame -
The ghost in the shell of the
Abandoned factory
Speaks secrets of
Long misused tools,
Broken cinder blocks,
And locked away rooms -
Modern ruins and electric tombs
Long left behind on this hidden highway -
And evermore in urban legend.

Lucid

I. Stomping Ground

Traversing the rural fringes
Of urban reality,
Haunting the spirits
With lamps and curious minds.

II. Marble City

I know when you were born and died,
But I want to see beyond the moss
On your gravestone.
Who were you in life?

III. Old Church

a. Cathedral.

I go back in time as I brush webs of dust
From the stained glass window,
Wondering what secrets this
Old church buried with its dead.

b. Esoteric.

As stained as memory,
This old window yet reflects light
Like the sermons once held
In the holy hall.

Farewell Party (Leaving the Old Church)

The ravens on the roof
Stand guard like gargoyles -
These grim feathered ghouls
Perch atop the once proud passages
That they now pretend to own,
And sing a sad a cappella
In mockery of memory.

To End a Journey

I leave as the morning light
Lifts the late night's velvet veil
And the moon bids farewell
To the starry sky,
Wondering if warning signs
Will be like hieroglyphs
To a future age.

Into the Light

Walking at the crack of dawn on
This early morn,
Through fresh cut grass
And beside foggy fields,
My shoes soaked with dew -

I stop to take a drink
And pause to think:
This simple heaven's
Greater'n
That urban hell.

Atalaya

Dark watch tower
Overlooking the lonely beach
Built without blueprint -
Summer home sculpted
From brick and mortar,
Its plans first and solely sketched
In the dreams of a genius and poet.

Ordered chaos - artistic anarchy;
The sculpture room seems to
Summon the spirit
Of the poet's late wife -
As if the ghost
Of the lady sculptor
Haunts the mossy halls
Just to finish her last work.

Manifest Destiny

How wild was the west?
How true rang the gold,
That men sought and killed
For it?

How mighty the steed,
And how much mightier
The man who rode it
And held the law on his hip?

How long the roads of those days?
How deep the secrets?
Would the spirits of
Doc Holliday and Wyatt Earp
Speak to us in the old saloon?

The Old Farm

The old overgrown barnyard,
After decades of disuse,
Lays littered with rusty old equipment
And is now surrounded by verdant nature -
The spirit of the abandoned farm
Seems to whisper to the urban explorer,
Who takes only pictures and
Leaves only footprints.

The grandfather of the old farming family
May still haunt the grounds,
As if existing between the lines
Of days gone past and ever present nature.

The spirit of nature herself heals the ground,
Growing around the old equipment -
Which nature rusts away and destroys...
All old things become new again.
Even all of the old mason jars,
Farm tools and bicycle frames
May be made new again.

Yet, how much do we learn
From the liminality of
The old farmhouse
Existing between two worlds -
Broken down and dead, yet the foundation stands -
The farm itself fallen into disuse,
Yet nature overtakes it, and makes it live again -
The area has been long abandoned,
Save for use by hunters and explorers.

The serenity and beauty of nature
Dispel the gloom of the old farm.
The broken down barns,
Mere skeletons of the
Glory days of tobacco farming,
Stand as silent symbols
Of the spirit of the past,
Yet even the smell of pine sap
And the caw of the crow
And the flutter by of butterflies
Raise one's own spirit
While still reflecting
On the lessons of the past.

Drawing Lines in the Dark

Walking alone at night
With only lonely streets
To keep me company
As the moon lights my path.

Who can say
What secrets lay
Around the corner or
Undiscovered by
Human thought?

What lines do I read between?
What is there already -
Hidden in plain sight?

Inconspicuous -
But Not
Invisible.

Omote and Ura of Kata -
The outer shape
And inner meanings.

The lines and shape
Of the form
Once practiced -
No longer static but
Natural motions
Of the body
Moving on its own,
Flowing without thought.

The full moon
Is reflected by
The puddle of water
Near the curb.

I see only an outer shape -
Yet the water yields to the touch
And I cannot grasp or hold
Its form which flows -
Taking the shape of its container.

SPLASH

Drawing Lines in the Dark - Page 2

But the moon is still
And always was
Holding us all in his orbless eyes.

Sky Circuitry

As I take a shortcut through
An abandoned building
I see the lightning
Strike in the distance
As I look through the threshold -
Where the back door once was.

The thunder rolls
Through the atmosphere -
Which is thick on this
Twilit eve

Fingers of electricity
Crackle their way through the clouds
Like arrows of angels
Piercing the heavens -
And thunder rolling in their wake.

Ah the contrast -
Sun setting -
As the storm
Rolls by in its place.

And how small I am -
When looking at the workings of nature -
She reveals and heals
All in good time -
If we would allow.

All things have a season
And a reason.

The light of the storm
And of nearby lamps
Illuminate my mind
And the old parking lot
Near where I now sit,
Sipping coffee -
Soaking up up the breezy
Summer air.

Sky Circuitry - Page 2

This old building -
Its old threshold
Beholds
Modern development
While the old has seen
Many seasons.

Nature is reclaiming it
Back to herself,
Surrounding this condemned strip
With a fresh coat of green
As this little world built by men
Slowly falls apart,
Forgotten for the modern...

But the spirit of nature
Never forgets.

I try to read
Between the lines
Of the cracks
In the old bricks -
Only to learn that the
Truth can reveal herself in
What is not said.

It leaves me to my intuition
And the fruition
Of a brand new day -
But only after the dark storm
And the calm night
Pass...

Book I - Part II:
Of Light and Dark

Of Light and Dark

Faith and prayers
Are your only hope
In this hopeless place.

The flickering candle flame
Of your spirit
Should light a small path
As you stumble towards destiny;
Pray that God would guide your way.

The great light of countless souls
Converging towards a common cause,
A strong, spiritual, sacred cause,
Would help to dispel the shroud
And lift the veil
Upon many of our souls
And help us on our way
To finding salvation.

As we trudge through this
Murkiest of swamps,
Holding our
Softly glowing lanterns
On high
To peer into the void of
Fog and phosphor,
We should follow the path
Laid out for us
By the Eternal Lighthouse
Of the Holy Spirit,
And believe in God with all our hearts,
And follow His Word,
And go to dwell with Him
When He calls all those that are His
To walk the golden streets of Heaven
And rejoice in the Spirit Forever-more!

Of Dreams and Ambitions

From the day a soul
Is pulled from the Guff
To inhabit its 70-year hull,
Are its Dreams and Innocence not enough
To succeed,
And to heed
God's plan
For man?

Yet, do not the cares of the world
Eventually depress the soul
With their harsh conditions?
Into the void our innocence is hurled,
So our dreams we must hold on to,
And begin to form into ambitions.

In using our new-found experience,
Do we not realize our ambitions,
Formed from innocent dreams,
And once again realize innocence?

Humanity

A soul of
Up above,
Thrown
Alone
Into this world,
Hurled
To the lions and boars
And the liars and whores
With whom,
'Til I rest in my tomb,
I must share my life,
And all my strife,
As I struggle and cope
To create hope,
And uphold the belief
That we can end all grief,
And that we,
The true friends and family,
May come together,
Like birds of a feather,
For an even greater end:
The helping
And loving
Of all people 'til the end
Of earthly crime
And earthly time,
When this world will die,
And we will fly
To Heaven above,
With nothing but love,
To live forever
And ever!

Humanity II

The world has come undone;
Father is even against son,
Daughter against mother,
Brother against brother.

Since almost the Beginning
We have been sinning,
Often failing to heed
God's Eternal creed.

By our own sin we are cursed,
And the sinner's fate is the worst,
For the wages of sin are death
Forever-more in Hell's fiery breath.

This is why we must
Place in God our trust.
God would save us all, every one,
If we'd just accept and love His Son.

Remember and tell God's Almighty Word;
By no heart would God want it unheard.
We should express to others His love,
'Til we join and praise Him up above.

Book I - Part III:
Castle of Bones

Castle of Bones

I built a castle of bones
From my closet of skeletons;
A life of unreleased regrets,
A life of unpaid debts.

Take a one way trip to despair
Inside these castle walls,
Forgotten years of bloody tears
Inside these ancient halls.

Antiquity

A book unopened,
Covered with dust.
A knife unsharpened,
Covered with rust.

A door shut tight,
Covered with cracked paint.
A room dark as night,
Covered with years of taint.

Renovation

A Renovation,
An Innovation,
From Antiquity
To Equity,
Bleaching the bloodstains away.

Room by room,
Tomb by tomb,
Lighting up my gloom
And scaring my monsters away.

No more regrets...
Time to pay my debts...
Time to place my bets
That I will succeed one day;

And when the night yields to day,
I re-enter the fray,
But there are still shades of gray,
And I pray God would light my way.

Necrophony

i.

Across the Stygian depths I set sail
For the Halls of Abandonment
Where the theories of life fail;
My malignant quest was hell-sent.

ii.

From the shores of Necropolis
I view endless ruination
Circling the Castle of Abyss
Where dwell many an aberration.

iii.

These dark denizens, full of hate,
Are encroachingly hell-bent,
But death this day is not my fate;
My victory is Heaven-sent.

iv.

That ferocious foundation,
Amidst a somber stench of death,
Sits in silent celebration
Of its chance to end my breath.

v.

On reaching the Rooms of Ruin,
My mettle must face the Great Fiend,
In whose cauldron dark death's brewing;
This wicked wizard I must end.

vi.

By the light of the Demon Moon
I destroy these undead devils;
With Godspeed I shall very soon
Climb the castle's highest levels.

vii.

I have strongly stormed the evil halls;
My holy might resists his spells;
His vile blood stains ancient walls
As my sword dooms him to dark hells.

Book I - Part IV:
Midnight Musings

Midnight Musings

In so many ways
Might I describe the
Eerie,
Illuminated,
Calm,
Darksome,
Yet thought-provoking
Realm of night.

Even as the
Blanket of Shadowy Calm
Envelops
And Enraptures
Our side of the planet
And Reveals
Mother Earth's
Hidden, sentimental beauty and
Inspiring, glorious view of
The Heavens,
Do we not also cover ourselves
In a shadowy calm of introspection,
And reveal our own hearts' yearnings?

Starry,
Starry
Skies
Do I see,
As dotted and
As versatile
As my memory!
How shall I explore
Either of these?

Is not the
World of
Well-Worn Pathways
Within my mind
But one universe
Contained within another?
How can I understand the cosmos,
If I don't understand the mind?

Midnight Musings continued

Even as I behold
Nature's Beauty,
Should I not also recognize
Humankind's Beauty?
Dear God,

How shall I thank Thee
For the life
You gave me,
For the world
You gave unto us,
And even for Jesus,
Whose life
You gave up for us,
That we might live!

I do pray that,
On this night,
Even as
This side of the world
Rests,
That I as well
Should find my
Midnight respite,
In order to
Awake refreshed,
And observe
The beauty of
A new beginning,
A new start,
A new day,
To rejoin
The Entourage
For Eternity!

Dawn

Watching the sun rise
On this brand new day,
Another day to invest
My God-given talents
To bring glory to Him,
To help carry out
His great plans
To shine His Son's light
On the world,
That everyone may know
That the Son rose
And ushered in
A Brand New Day
For mankind
That will never end.

Future

Toward the distant horizon I tread,
Wondering what the future may hold;
I can only imagine what is ahead,
And the many sights that I will behold.

Yet, there is so much that has gone unsaid,
And so many great stories left untold;
Yet, I must keep praying that the riverbed
Keeps feeding the ocean of hope that has always flowed.

Most of what we've seen, heard, or read,
Whether it is modern or old,
Will one day, with this world, be dead;
It is God's Word that we must uphold.

In Jesus' footsteps we should walk day by day.
In knowing that He has already won the war,
We are sure that our faith will never stray.
Let us praise God now and forever-more!

Horizon

Toward the horizon
I continue to tread:
With the Eternal Goal
In sight:
To live life God's Way:
And while we never reach
Perfection,
That ultimate horizon,
God's Plan is
Perfection
And will work out to
His Glory
And
Our Salvation
On Earth
And Forever
In Heaven!

My Pen

My pen traces a path
To the innermost
Of my soul
And opens the gate
That leads to
My laid-up store of
Prismatic love
Inspired by
The Heart and Mind
Of the Almighty.

Fugue

Life is lines of poetry
multiple metaphor
interwoven Truth(s)
Hidden by
our lack of understanding
Lit (upon) by
God's Great Grace,
His Never-Ending Flame,
Word of Everlasting Beauty.

(Re:) Vision

Finding the poetry
Hidden on a blank page,
Freeing the sculpture
Captured inside the heap of clay,
Polishing the diamond
Found in the rough:

Reaching beyond the horizon
To the rising Son
For divine inspiration,
Prophetic revelation,
Golden strands of
Fresh creation,
Weaving a tapestry
With God's Great Glory.

Chaos Theory

A drop in the ocean,
Tides subside;

Endless motion,
Planets collide;

A single day
Becomes the next;

A single breath,
A brush with death;

The lives we lead,
The webs we weave;

In one strand of time
All fates intertwine.

Miles to Go

I stop to see a leaf swirl with the wind;
I begin again and leave it all behind,
 With the whole world behind me,
 With the whole world before me,
Not knowing where my journey begins or ends,
 But that I can never quit
 Until God calls me Home.

The Enchanted Forest of Poetry

On a lonely night
And a lone rendezvous
Such as this,
My mind often departs
For the realm of living thought.

As I meditate,
And leave behind earthly concerns,
The winds of wanderlust
Carry my consciousness
To a land where
My beauteous thoughts
Are made manifest,
As verdant hills roll
Beneath an endless azure sky.

My desires and
The Enchanted Forest's magic
Become the warp
For each other's weft.

Each line
Of verse
Becomes
A strand
Of existence,
A blade
Of grass,
A forest
Of trees,
A mountain
Of possibilities,
A piece
Of new reality!

In the midst of
This realm of
Living Verse
Does the poet
Find himself created:

Where each
T H O U G H T
Intertwines
With a new
R E A L I T Y
To weave a
Brilliant,
Multicolored
Fabric,
Full of
The Yarn
Of a
New Reality
That was once
Only imagined.

Could this be some of the
Same attitude God had
When creating the universe
By only speaking His Word,
And Pronouncing His Thoughts?

Truly,
If an idea is a tree,
Let us plant a forest,
A new realm,
Full of rolling landscapes
Proclaiming truth and beauty!

Let us now escape
To such a land,
A land where anything
Can happen,
And ideas
Have the magic
Of Creation!

These City Streets

Riding these city streets,
Riding with the wind,
On this trusted bike,
Dreading the daylight,
On this endless night,
Seeking a nonexistent prey,
Seeking strange new enlightenment,
In all corners of the
Sparsely populated,
Dimly lit,
Night
Of a
Small town.

Riding these empty streets,
Nothing to see,
Too dark to see,
A world that sleeps
With the setting of the sun
And is covered by a blanket
Of dark all around.

Riding these empty streets,
Everything unseen,
A whole new world to see,
A world uncovered
By the setting of the sun,
A world lit by
The rising of the moon.

Book I - Part V:
Haiku

Haiku

Spring

Watching the birds fly,
My mind wanders to the sky,
Searching for beauty.

Summer

Practicing under
The shady sycamore tree -
The sun still finds me.

Fall

I read by streetlight -
Solemnly the silent owl
Watches me walking.

Winter

Wintry tree limbs hang
Upside down and touch the clouds -
Wooden icicles.

June

Lightning bugs like stars
Make the summer trees look like
An early Christmas

Mystery

Thick fog creeps from the
Field and is illuminated
By passing cars

Thought

The moon leads my path
To unknown journeys, secret
Pathways between the lines

Starlit Forest

Walking late at night
I can see Orion's belt
Amidst passing clouds

Ageless Expectation

Through the mossy fence
I see empty school buses
Waiting for children.

Haiku continued

Ladybug

The ladybug crawls
Across my hand before it
Spreads its wings and flies

Zen Garden

The zen garden's sand
And stones; such simplicity -
Subtle and sublime

Omnipresence

Contemplating all -
God's all around - I feel His
Love in all places

Strangely Soothing Storm

A late night rain fall -
Whose dripping meditation
Calms my dreary soul

Nightmare

The cryptic preening
Of my black cat at midnight
Calms my dreary soul

Shady

The thoughtful napping
Of my gray cat at noontime
Calms my dreary soul

Book I - Part VI:
Moonlit Meditation

Moonlit Meditation

Beetles and bugs of the night
My frequent customers of the porch light
Paying simply with their incessant buzz
As I sit on the steps sipping wine

Verdant Dusk

In the moonlit haze
Of a late summer's eve
Is this well-worn back road,
Set upon on each side by
Darkest woods that smell of
Live oak and dying pine.
Fog rises from the road in the wake
Of a surprise rain shower.

The green freshness
Of the encroaching woods
Tempts a walk through it -
The soft, dewy grass,
Overhanging trees,
Chirping crickets,
Abandoned buildings -
Remains of civilization,
Returning to nature -
And spiders stringing
Their silky portraits
All invite a stroll
Through this verdant dusk.

Nature

The sky is gray
On this late summer day
As the sun imbues
Its various hues
Upon the scene.
A sight to be seen,
A beauty to behold,
A thousand campfire stories to be told.
With the settling twilight
And the settling night
Comes the settling fog
About every log,
Every limb
As the light continues to dim.

Yet, do you hear it?
Yes, a kindred spirit,
As it beckons to us,
Nature's patrons,
Who think deep thoughts of
All things up above, and things all around
And adventures upon which to bound.

Nature II

As I continue to tread
The well-worn path between the trees,
Many thoughts swim in my head
Of the refreshing beauties
Of the crisp, clean air
Playing in my hair,
The rainbow
That has begun to show
Over the tips of the trees,
The birds' outspoken symphonies,
And the sun-rays that warm my face
As I pass each open, sun-lit space.
Nature has its own music,
Its own specially tuned melody.
I never want to lose it,
For what it means to me,
I can never fully express,
Even as my feelings well up in my chest.

It is here in the forest,
This place of nature and spirit,
That I feel blessed,
And ignore the old habit
Of humankind
To mind
Its own business
And forget about the wilderness.

Come friend,
Let's walk this path again,
Before this great day can end!

As the Rain Falls

On this early morn,
As the rain falls,
Before this side of the world wakes,
Invisible toothpicks
Yet seem to hold my eyes open.

Nonetheless,
My mind has
Unapologetically
Left for the world of dreams
With the rest of me in tow,
Like rain falling
With no cloud to fall from.

My mind yet wanders
Beyond sleep,
Beyond caffeine;
My heart races,
As it pumps my lifeblood
Through its course.

The rain races to the ground
As it flirts with gravity
And frolics in a
Pittering
Pattering
Dance

So alike are
My mind, my heart, and the clouds:
All saturated with promises of
Ideas, Life, Sustenance,
Which feed the fires
Of the dreams whose flames
Incessantly burn within each of us.

Nonetheless,
By nature's rule,
What goes up
Must come down.

As the Rain Falls continued

My heart,
The lifeblood of my dreams,
Will one day descend to the depths,
But on parting with this world,
A new lifeblood can be realized on high.

My brain,
That convoluted pathway of ponderings,
That ethereal dwelling Of dreams,
Will one day
Fully comprehend the realms of the dead.

The rain,
As it falls,
Yet sustains life;
Where rain seems to end,
It begins anew in another form.

Truly,
Once thoughts
And hopes
And efforts
And tears of happiness
Are rained upon the dream,
Do we not see
A sprouting hope
Of its original splendor
Coming to the surface?

Let it rain,
Let it rain,
Let it rain...

Snowfall

Looking out on the field of purest white
That our peaceful neighborhood has become,
I feel wind and snowflakes so very light
Gently touching my face in the night's cold glum.

Coming back in to warm my cold hands
In front of the old fireplace,
I look out at the winter wonderland
Painted with a sparkling layer of icy lace.

Carried on a steady eastern breeze,
This is a snowstorm like no other;
It lays a white blanket on the bare ground and trees,
And makes for beautiful weather.

Needing neither rhyme nor reason,
Children will wake to see the white glow,
Don coat and glove, and enjoy the season,
Throwing snowballs and making angels in the snow!

A robe of white has covered all that is ugly,
Like the robes we'll wear in God's Paradise,
When we join Him for a resplendent Eternity,
Rejoicing on the unending day of our new lives!

Book I - Part VII:
Trials and Redemption

Trials

We sow the seeds
God has given us:
We work the ground
Until the day of harvest:

All Things
Of Worth
Are Worth Waiting For,
Worth Working For:

And God's Plan
Is Worth Everything
And All Time.

God makes the soils
Of our broken spirits
Fertile once again,
He plants seeds in our hearts
That we might begin to
Grow ready to serve Him:

And every day we must
Tend to our gardens,
With God's Guidance
And brilliant, shining Son
Whose love is that
Ever-living Water
That daily cleanses
Our dry, parched earth.

In the end
God will renew us to Him
Through His One and Only Son,
That the curse upon man
May be broken,
And that we may
Rejoice in the fruits
Of our labors
In those trials
Made to serve the
Greater Glory of God.

Life

I.

Life, with all its God-filled splendor,
Is worth far more than just living.
My heart, full of love and valor,
Praises God and continues to sing.
Never will I tire of His great mercy
Or working for His greater glory,
As He, by wisdom, makes me see
How He loves us eternally.

II.

Strife, with all its oppressing strength,
Tries us every living day,
Until finally we, at length,
Wonder if God has gone away.
No, God's love will never come undone!
He would not forsake even one.
He gave us His one and only Son,
That we may be saved, and the war won!

III.

Heaven, with all its God-filled splendor,
Is far greater than 'most anything.
My heart, full of love and valor,
Praises God and continues to sing.
Always will I praise God, for He
Makes the dead live and the blind see,
And gives to us of His love endlessly,
As we join Him for Eternity.

Redemption

Nothing but the Blood of Christ
Can wash all my sins away,
So that I may re-enter the fray,
With a newfound strength from God,
That will help me through
All the strife
In my life,
All His trials,
His purifying fires,
His glorious plans,
So that at His Heavenly Harvest
I may be called
A good and faithful servant,
And join Him Forever-more!

God in Everything

Blanketed by
The warmth of
God's Love,
Compassed round about by
God's Great Creation;
I consider the constellations,
The ebb and tide of emotion;
And yet ponder how
So many could be
Unable to see
God in Everything.

Omni Presen(ts)ce

I rest in
God's
Presence
And
Ever Present
Love
Which
Tomorrow
And
Tomorrow
Present
New
Presents,
New
Victories,
A
New
Day,

A
New
Present,
A
New
Life,
God's
Great
Gift,
Eternally
Present.

A Prose-Poem Prayer/My Psalm

God,

You never left me in the hard times. You were with me always, using the circumstances to teach me, lead me, show me how much You loved me, how to love myself, You, and others. Thank You.

Your Great Work is never done. You continuously create new heights and depths of glory and inspiration within our lives, our souls. You search my heights and depths to find what I never knew I had all the time: and if it is wrong, then please fix it in me, oh God; and if it seems good to You, make it better.

I pledge my entirety to Your Cause that I may help You lead everyone to Jesus, that we would all revel in Your Glory, for ever, and ever. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Eternal Hope and Glory

O God,
An eternity ago,
You wrote the verses of my soul:

Within me
Incessantly burns
The Flame of Hope;
My soul sings the song
Of sweet salvation,
Received from
Jesus Christ,
The Son of God,
The Son of Man,
And the Savior of
All God's children.

Let us now work towards
His greater glory,
That an eternity from now
We can look back at our lives
Without shame.

Eternity Begins Now

The Holy Spirit
Whose grace knows no bounds
Gives freely to
Any heart that
Believes
And
Loves
Him
And
His
Only Begotten Son
Whom He gave to us
That we might be saved.

The wisdom of the spirit gives
True sight
To the closed eye of the mind,
True hearing
To the deaf ear of the heart.

God even gives to us
Wonderful new dreams
To live out,
Life in abundance -
Such a joy it is
To work for the Lord!

Yet there will always be
Struggles
While we are
In this world -
We must remember that
God has put us here
To lead us every day into
A New Lesson,
A New Creation,
A New Heaven on Earth,
As any good father would.

Eternity Begins Now continued

It is the example of Christ
We should always strive for -
God has called us to be
Spiritual warriors
Who will dedicate their lives
To what is right,
According to God's will,
And against all odds.
Let us daily rejoice in God's great plan.
Let us rely on God's strength.
Let us play our part on
The stage of life,
The book of destiny,
The River of the Soul,
That we might have life more abundantly,
A Heaven on Earth,
Eternal bliss hereafter!

Let us continue to
Believe and dream,
For our adventures have
Only just begun!

Eternity Begins Now!

Book II:

A Prose-Poem Journey from Horror to Hope

Sailing into the sunset,
I leave all darkness behind me;
Days now gone by I can forget,
Sailing across the sea.
Shadows are falling around me now,
And sun and ocean seem to have met;
Still I sail down that path of gold
Into the far sunset.

- Hugh Buckner Johnston,
Sailing into the Sunset

Shades of Gray

I cannot help but to every so often sit and contemplate the meaning of things, how a man gazing from his window, watching the leaves breeze by, seems to know a little too much about the many shades of gray, those of the literal and those of meaning, and the very nature of existence.

How often is one inspired to sit and ponder such things, and also ponder that which we take for granted about what we believe we know? I can especially recall a rather shady day many years ago, the events of which are still vivid and clear in my mind. The very core and definition of these recalled events are yet rather shady to me, both literally and abstractly.

My recollection of the strangeness of that brisk, late August day begins with its most glorious of sunsets. I had been taking my usual shortcut through my neighbor's yard from the street behind my own. I had been paying special attention to this sunset, and the very mood of things at the time.

With every step, I caught a refreshing lungful of cool, nature-conditioned and fragranced air, as a wooing zephyr ran its fingers through my hair. Even the sunset carried with it such soft-spoken pleasures, and bore such beautiful hues that, if impressed by happenstance upon the casual wanderer, its shades of waning day would be long remembered. Such hues upon God's great canvas I had never before seen the sun paint, along with shady, yet almost living, breathing strokes of animated gray clouds. Even the sun itself seemed to thrive in two worlds as it took its residence on the horizon. Balance, or the seeking for it, was one world, and the other was Judgment, reserved for the end of the day.

However, as I continued towards my house, and the waning beams of light let on thickening layers of darkness, those shades of gray, the entire scene remained altogether acquiescent, almost painfully peaceful, and deeply devoid of any sound or commotion from within or without. As I continue to inspect this very scene over and over in my mind, I find that it seemed to foreshadow the scenes that unfolded in a somewhat similar fashion later that evening.

Indeed, later that evening, as I was relaxing in the solarium, things remained to be strangely quiet. Ironically, a loud, persistent knock on the back door broke the silence.

"Who in the world might be knocking at my door," I thought to myself, "at this time of night?"

I cautiously stood up and slowly trodded towards the door, and opened it in just the same fashion. To my relief, it was simply a young-looking man, with yet a few years more on him than I, standing on the other side. I noticed that he was carrying a professional-looking briefcase, whose contents, as well as the importance pertaining thereto, I am to this day still unsure of. He mentioned his name to me as I began to welcome him in. However, over the years, I have forgotten what it was. I do recall the gist of our initial conversation.

"I am trying to keep away from him," the fellow spoke, "and it is important that I hide myself away for just a little while. The dark one must not find me and what I carry."

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"No problem," I replied in an effort to calm him somewhat, "I have an extra room. You can stay and work with your things in there."

"Thank you," he began again, "I really appreciate it. I wish I had a way to repay you."

"Don't worry about it," I reassured him, "I'm sure that your mission is indeed important. I'll do what I can to help. Just the mention of a 'dark one' sends chills up my spine. Oh, by the way, I was about to get along to bed myself. I'll show you to your room on the way."

We went about our way through the house, and I indeed showed him to the room, which is located near mine. That was fortunate enough, for if there was to be any trouble, I was only a room away.

From there, the fellow began shuffling through his mysterious, yet obviously important briefcase. I checked up on the rest of the house, as I prepared for what was to be a good night's sleep - or so I thought.

I had already been sleeping comfortably when there came a ring on the doorbell and a loud, yet perfectly measured series of knocks on the door. As I sat up quickly in surprise, I wondered for the second time that night who could possibly be at the door at such a time. Yet, could this time be the coming of this 'dark one' as it was foretold by my guest, looking for his target, his victim, his prey, his enemy?

With that thought in mind, I proceeded out of bed to greet he who was on the other side of the door. It was to be the only way that I would lay to rest my apprehensions as well as shed some light on my guest and the so-named 'dark one'.

As I approached the door, I put my eye on the peephole to catch a glimpse of my second late-night guest. What I saw puzzled me and yet even worried me somewhat. I saw nothing. Literally nothing. It appeared that the whole neighborhood had just blacked out and become darkness.

For a few seconds, I stood there, frozen-like, weighted down with heavy ponderings. Yes, the night had continued to lay upon our half of the world its layers of darkness, the sun had set upon our wrath and into its world of judgment, and the world still yet almost seemed strangely devoid of sound...I could hear my own heart beating.

Could it have been judgment on the other side of the door, he who will come to them that are not ready, as a "thief in the night"? Or the "blackness and darkness of death" which is reserved for them at judgment? Or possibly, the concentrated powers of evil to thwart a holy mission for good?

At long last, I opened the door, and took a single step out. It was there, at such a close proximity, that I noticed what the darkness was that I first witnessed from behind the door. It was, in actuality, the 'dark one' himself.

I stood frozen again, before this shade, this shade of a man that might be, or might have been. Yes, I stood before him, I in my balance, and he in judgment. A shade of gray he surely was.

"I am looking for a young fellow," the dark one spoke with a slow sureness, "who goes by a certain name."

Shades of Gray - Page 3

A name was mentioned by him, a name which most certainly belonged to the man that had become reluctant guest in my home.

"Tell me if you have seen him," the dark one beseeched, "or if he is here."

"I've met no one by that name," said I while attempting to keep a straight face, "and in the name of Jesus Christ, get thee away from this place and never return."

Those were the last words we spoke one to another; I immediately stepped back inside, being the least bit interested in seeing what mode of travel that dark man used, whether the four winds or just two dark feet.

That was that. I decided to attempt to sleep the rest of the night and not dwell too much on those events before the daylight and hope dawned once more. Come morning, I would also bid my happenstance guest goodbye and good luck.

Indeed, the events that transpired that night were peculiar, mind-boggling, yet altogether thought-provoking. I hadn't noticed on that day, but as I have of late given it much further thought, I find that it was yet just as much a lesson for me as it was a small part of the struggle between good and evil. The sunset that day, its shades of gray, its clouds, the sun itself existing in two worlds, the coming of night, and the next morning seemed to all mirror me and aspects of myself.

With the sunset and ending of the day, I remembered the Biblical saying "let the sun not go down upon your wrath", in which the true meaning to be gained is that one should not rest in the fight for good. Settle what you can before the sun goes down and the night becomes you. Settle what you can in life before your sunset quickly approaches and death becomes you, that you would be prepared for the eternity you will face afterwards. Be a benefactor for holiness, and the unending internal conflict of the cosmos.

The sun on the horizon signified my very nature. The image of the sun on the horizon symbolizes existence in two worlds, one being balance, and the other judgment. The greater aspect of the nature of the cosmos is represented by the setting sun. The universe is balance, ordered chaos, mathematical spontaneity. Yet, with the setting of the sun, comes the struggle, and the judgment itself, with the old universe eventually wearing down, Heaven coming down to all those blessed, and the darkness and blackness of death in the lake of fire reserved for the unrepented. We find that the young fellow represents balance, as well as the struggle. The dark one represents judgment, in another way signifies evil, and yet in another way the coming of the darkness and blackness of death for whom it is reserved.

The young man and the dark one even represent the respective sides of myself and each one of us. The man held himself true and balanced, and carried his work with him. I suppose that his briefcase can be compared to that which all of us should carry and work from in talking to others about God, and working for Him: God's Word. Let neither any person, nor the clouds of stresses gone by (like unto the

Shades of Gray - Page 4

clouds blotting out wonderful hues in the perfect sunset), nor evil things, change it or blot it. The dark one was that thief in the night, the darkest shade of gray (both literally and abstractly), the dark blot coming to throw out the good. The unlikely guest was yet prepared and inside the house of balance and true chaos was not let in.

With the wrath now gone and the peace of the good night coming, the sun, as well as hope, would indeed dawn again. Yes, dear God, I'm ready for the struggle. Love is the light that conquers all other shades of gray!

Beams of Darkness

Beams of darkness and ensuing night, I bid thee to not engulf my very essence during my endeavor to rid this accursed house of its daunting embodiment of terror.

I am not unsure of myself, as I have indulged myself in countless similar exorcisms. Nonetheless, there is a strong foreboding within my soul about this place. I and my partner, the premiere holy woman of the region, sense a great sort of emanation of evil from a concentrated source the likes of which neither of us have ever encountered.

The house, now half overgrown by ever-present nature, was built ages ago, on the site of a strongly spiritual realm. The spirits that inhabit this place manifest emotions and feed upon hidden fears, to increase their aura and haunt the house's living inhabitants. From local reports, it appears that these spirits may even be demonic in nature.

The most fortunate inhabitants died from sheer terror of meeting with horror and darkness incarnate. Those less fortunate than they escaped with their lives, yet had to live out the rest of their days stricken by darkness and terror upon their soul. Has the moral substance of society degraded so far as to provoke such wrath and invoke such a spell on the manner of men?

Indeed, my partner and I are here to refute the theory, and reclaim the house as rightful inhabitation for all men. Yes, she did truly approach me that fateful day, and beseeched me to assist her, for my prowess as a paladin and my skill with the holy blade yet surpass their already great legend. My partner herself has also accomplished no small amount of fame, even at the ripe young age she appears to be, for her holy incantations and success with exorcisms. Truly, if I am all the more the physical aspect of our holy visitation, then she signifies the spiritual aspect.

Yes, I myself, not unlike my partner, must walk the way of truth and light and honor; it is my unending mission to cast away all darkness from the ways of the world and the hearts of men. When the light comes, the shadows must flee. The darkness still yet tries envelop to the world in its cloak, but I must stay strong. That is the way that it has to be, the way it must be, I am sure of it...

...These thoughts were racing through my head, as we watched, from behind the long window in the house's northside room, the night beginning to lay its layers of darkness upon the light of day. Even during the day, this room catches only a very shaded amount of light, for this house, which was once vital and busy, now succumbs to the oppressive overgrowth. We must not let the horror of such evil snare us in its web of eternal darkness.

We now await any sign of the very weaver of this web, the one that weaves this dark web upon the souls of men. Our suspicion grows thicker, as does the thickness of the darkness, the very thickness of the utter, unnatural silence that is of the sound of nonexistence and is at the same time bold in its loudness, its existence of nonexistence.

Beams of Darkness - Page 2

The tension in the air has drawn tight, and is seemingly waiting for release, like unto a man upon a highwire. The silence continues to grow, and speaks so loudly now that it would make a pantomime seem a bold speaker in contrast.

Irony of ironies, do I hear someone rapping on the door? Or is it my own heart beating upon the door of my chest, as if to leap out and carry me with it in a sprint of fear? Am I too sure of myself, yet too concerned over the overgrowth of darkness upon the day, of evil upon the world, of horror upon the souls of men? Could I be allowing myself to fall in the house's snare of terror personified? Could it be terror itself knocking on the door, ready to open it, and even ready to open that door which leads to my soul?

I must turn and face my partner, who stands close behind me, for she is already beginning her incantations. I must ready myself for the inevitable battle, as she blesses my sword. Yet, what will happen, should I fail? What if I fail...I cannot think such thoughts! Let me turn, and look fate in the eyes!

...Outside! Even through the vines and weeds that half cover the window, I can see it, in the moon's scarce light, approaching from the overgrown lawn! The embodiment of terror - my Lord, it is monstrous - uncountable arms - its demonic smile is not of this world!

I must count on my - wait, where is my partner? She has disappeared! Has her spirit already succumbed? Then I shall be the next victim...Where shall I hide? Or has the door to terror already opened?!?

.....
...Yes, the bedroom!.....I'll hide myself there...
...This can't be happening...no, no, no...
...Can't think, can't think.....Think, think!...
...Yes, down this west hall...the first room on the left...Move,
move, move...
...Yes.....It is safe here...
...What? What is that noise?
... The stench of death!
...Its footsteps come ever closer -
...the stench of death!
...My God, my sword - no use -
...Its maddening glare -
...STAY AWAY FROM MEEEEeee

A Fateful Inheritance

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. - Psalms 23:4

Death in and of itself is altogether a rather natural incident. However, it was the circumstances surrounding the death of the old man that make it not only all the more intriguing, yet also necessitate inspection by other people who may solve its mystery - and the curse laid upon that very house in which it happened.

Yes, there has been a curse upon this house and family estate in the back parts of Charleston, South Carolina for many years. Even though many of the finer details of how this curse was put upon this place have been largely forgotten and the rest of them subtly changed from generation to generation by word-of-mouth, the very motive was brought about by slaves in the Civil War era who retaliated against their evil owners by way of ancient rites.

Those who were then slaves were very spiritual and were very forthright about not being violent; an eye for an eye makes the whole world blind. They called upon the spirits to bring the wrath of justice upon those who oppressed them. What the curse entailed upon the family of slave-owners and their estate is that not only the entire family but also all succeeding generations would each die a dark and painful death, and their property would curse anyone else who tried to alleviate the mystery of the spirits bound to it.

Even recently, in June of 1997, the last surviving member of the fourth generation since the Civil War era has succumbed to the house's animated plague of death. Over time while living out his days in the house, he slowly began to accept the fate that was prescribed to him because of evils long gone, evils that he did not personally indulge in.

Finally, on that fateful evening, the storm was unusually strong and the night let on layers of darkness that seemed devoid of any natural light. He felt a premonition of death, which was like unto the heightened awareness that one may have when in moments of danger or the vicinity of death itself. Silently he yet sat in that old, dusty chair in the study, with his legs crossed, while peering out of the large window, stroking his long gray beard, contemplating what he knew would come in due time that very night.

Finally, he reached for the lighter in his pocket and lit the candle on the table next to him. He had decided to leave behind not just the estate, but also his last words. He began to write a letter for whomever would come upon the property and find an old man lying quietly and peacefully in his chair, fated to never speak another word except in the realm of spirits.

Yes, he took pen and paper and wrote his last letter. The paper, like the rest of the house, and even the man himself, was old and worn down and decrepit, from great age and neglect. Also, the language used in the letter was somewhat archaic and difficult to read, yet was rich and descriptive, and drifted off into the dark wonder and mystique of the spiritual curse upon the house and its

A Fateful Inheritance - Page 2

last, ill-fated inhabitant.

Even as he finished his letter and placed the pen back on the table, a fierce backdraft of tormenting wind wooshed the window open. The wind also instantaneously snuffed the candle's flame, as if to foreshadow the snuffing out of the old man by way of inherited curse. The gray old man was startled, and quickly fixed his glare out the window, even though the wind had just as quickly settled down to a smooth, flowing whisper, that peacefully played at the acquiescent curtains. The pitter-patter of dancing rain continued its frolicking out in the yard, as if in righteous indignation.

A false alarm, perhaps? A moment later, an arm of lightning lashed out and struck the ground about 100 feet away from the house. In the ensuing flash and the seemingly immediate crack of thunder, a dark figure that roughly resembled the shape of a man, standing upright, could be seen standing within ten feet of the window.

So dark was this figure, silhouetted against the bright flash, that only the outline could be made out. The distinguishing feature, however, was the pair of cold, crimson eyes that shone brightly and gazed down into the soul of the fearless old man staring back.

Indeed, Death's Head had appeared in an instant, and disappeared along with the lightning. In yet another instant, lightning cracked again, this time striking the ancient, gnarled tree about 50 feet away from the house. In the ensuing flash, the old man could be seen sitting perfectly still...with blood slowly creeping from a deep, yet perfectly measured slit across his neck. The rain also continued to pour, as the light continued to fade, as even the large, 250-year old oak continued to burn down...

Whether by happenstance or strange twist of fate, the old man's longtime friend came to visit the next day, only to find him sitting coldly, yet peacefully in his chair. Out of momentary shock, nary a thought came to the mind of this now-troubled friend. In the next moment, with tears in his eyes, he whispered silent prayers, that his dead friend's soul could find respite, for it had been released from the mortal body tied to the cursed estate.

After his solitary mourning, the old friend glanced over to the table upon which his late companion had written many letters. There he noticed the old man's final letter, which he immediately walked to and read. The old man's companionship and good will shall not go in vain, thought the old friend. Indeed, could the curse now be lifted, now that the final family member was gone?

The old friend left everything as he found it and took his story to the police station. Even as he was telling them of the estate's supernatural curse, the police were becoming suspicious of his credibility. They quickly dismissed him as an old-fashioned, superstitious old man.

Having no luck with the police, he visited the local private detective nearby. For the second time, the old friend told his story and described the nature of the supernatural curse, while hoping that this time he would be believed. The detective promised the old friend

A Fateful Inheritance - Page 3

that he would give the scene a look-over and determine if it was simply a petty thief who burglarized the house and murdered the old man. He also assured the old friend that the curse, if it even existed, would not take anyone else.

The old friend certainly hoped so. He and the detective shook hands and went their separate ways. The old friend suffered a fatal heart attack that evening. Two glowing eyes could be seen outside his window at the very moment of the heart attack...As for the detective, he had decided from the very start that the old friend's story had been far too outlandish and superstitious to believe. It was thusly that he did not even bother to waste the effort of calling the coroner and the police squad to escort him to the house to investigate. He figured that he would simply give the place a look-over, as he had promised, and decide later if the scene was worth taking the time to even write up the report for.

That same night, on his own time, the detective approached the house, with flashlight in hand. He was hoping to "re-create the crime scene", and determine the order of events that had transpired the night before. Even as he approached the house, a thunderstorm was coming in and growing in strength quite rapidly, which also made the scene rather similar to the way it was the previous night.

The detective let himself in. He came upon the "murder scene" almost immediately. From the window peering out into the yard, he observed the burned-down oak, and the angry storm, with its sharp, stinging rain, tempestuous winds, and an occasional flash of lightning off in the distance.

As he turned towards the interior of the room, he received the startling sight of the old man lying peacefully in his chair. What further puzzled his usually cold, calculating, factual mind was the fact that there were no marks of struggle anywhere. For such a deep slit in a man's throat to be so perfectly measured, the murderer would have to have been immensely strong, well trained, and fast. It almost seemed that the murderer could not have been human, the detective thought, or the agonizing pain of receiving such a cut would cause even the most peaceful of men to fight back.

To add even more fuel to the fire of his curiosity, he noticed the letter that the old friend had mentioned. The detective took slow steps over to the table and pointed the flashlight towards the letter. He read it word for word, over and over. The letter had actually only helped to confound him even more.

The detective then decided that he was becoming overly superstitious. Settling back into the calm resignation that is typical of a detective, he proceeded to carefully study the window. He began to consider that window as a possible entry route for a burglar on such a dark and stormy summer night.

He placed his flashlight upon the left arm of the chair where the old man sat peacefully. The flashlight began to go dim and fade out altogether, as the detective had forgotten to replace the batteries. The timing couldn't have been worse, he thought.

Just as soon as he had finished that thought, the lightning struck about 100 feet away from the house. The thunder cracked fiercely, and in the instant of the lightning's flash, he caught a glimpse of an outline of a man out in the yard, silhouetted against the lightning. A pair of cold, crimson eyes shone brightly and gazed

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down into the soul of the detective.

Once again, Death's Head had appeared, and disappeared along with the lightning. Also with the lightning went the cool bravado of the detective. All of the detective's fear welled up within his throat, his entire body became tense, and he knew that he had just taken his last breath.

The lightning quickly lashed out again, this time 50 feet away from the house. In that instant the detective could be seen lying on the floor, with blood slowly creeping from a deep, yet perfectly measured slit across his neck. The curse had claimed its final victim...

"June 8, 1997

To any man that may find me here in my final respite:

'Tis in this gothic gateway to dark death that I sit and await my final moments, and my deliverer unto the fate of that which is Beyond. Yes, it is an ancient, inherited curse laid upon the house's very foundation. This house is cursed from the basement to the chimney's tip, and remains so until the end of time because of bloody evils which I did not personally commit. Even upon the family lineage has the curse been placed. It has finally been handed down to me, like unto a form of spiritual collateral issue.

I yet carry those stains, those century-old aftereffects of evil oppression, inherited by way of my bloodline. Every man shall meet his fate as it is given to him, and it is this that I do finally accept. I shall, however, continue my spiritual longsuffering, and try my hand at peace in those greater realms of the soul.

However, I pray that ye gentle yet unfortunate visitor would not meet the same fate as I, but that ye would leave as you came and seek out your own fate. I beseech you to tarry here no longer than needs be, in order that the anomalous spirits that rule this accursed gateway to darkest death wouldst still allow you to yet walk away with your breath and life. Take only your memory of this place with you, and pray that my soul would find the eternal peace that it has been so longing for, outside of this cursed body and this wretched estate.

And now, I, for what I know shall be my last moments on this plane of existence, shall go into death with calm expectation. I await he who has conquered in death and written in blood."

Nowheres and Dreamscapes

I love to walk when the day is gone
Beneath the star-set ev'ning sky,
Where I can talk with God alone
And feel His sacred presence nigh.
When I have laid my humbled soul
In full submission at his feet,
My sinful burdens from me roll
And leave His victory complete.

- Hugh Buckner Johnston,
The Peace of God

Standing on the doorway of existence, we can behold a dimension of ordered chaos, immeasurable depth, and odd, ethereal, otherworldly beauty. We are entering that transitory place for the spirit. As we step through, the gateway folds and closes on itself, and blinks out, as if it had never existed. As we stop for a moment to look around and take in the new environment, the spiritual tide continues to ebb and flow.

Even the dreamy patterns of colors and hues of the surreal ground that they stand on change in a continual flow. It may remind one of the effects of a multi-faceted disco globe, except that the patterns of colors seem to become almost the entire dimension. One string of colors is the warp for the other's weft. It is a yarn woven by the magic that finds its home here. The full glory of the phantasmagoria of color is indescribable, and beyond the league of even the glory of a rainbow magnified a thousand times.

Beyond even the colors was the scale of the dimension as a whole. Being a realm beyond necessary physicality, the dreamscape has no borders. The many objects and scenery continually become greater in number, as the magic of the dimension is further utilized.

The scenery itself is quite beautiful, even though it is in constant change by way of people dreaming all around the world, and also the nature of the spiritual and magical tide. The scenery is rich and wondrous nonetheless, with every kind of landscape imaginable taking form as we continue to look further into the distance of this seemingly endless realm called the dreamscape.

Beyond even the scenery and its countless treasures are the sensations that are to be felt and experienced. Even just standing in the dreamscape, one becomes lost, or perhaps found, in a swirling universe of overwhelming sensations, that ebb and flow with the rest of the dimension. These sensations become a state of being. One will find oneself a part of the dreamscape, an hence part of an evolving, fully realized, dream. For the living, it is the cross-space between the physical and spiritual dimensions. It is also the crossroads for countless dimensions...Hence the grand visions people have when having a near-death experience. What people see and feel in a near-death are quite real. They begin to cross the space between the

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physical and spirit realms, and therefore see beyond just their own existence.

As people dream, the concerns and worries and fears that have sunk down to the subconscious may find a place here where they will become manifest. As there must be many dimensions, whose realms I cannot even begin to fathom, that are linked to the dreamscape, I imagine that it is more than possible for the mind and soul to enter a dimension whose characteristics do indeed seem to be subconscious concerns made real.

The River of the Soul, as it continues to flow through the myriad realms of God's great universe, encompasses all the magic and all the dreams that make life worth living. All one has to do to find this magic and realize these dreams is open our minds to the spirit. We should not search within only our spirits to find the answers to our questions about the cosmos, but we should also look to the Holy Spirit of the cosmos itself, our Divine Creator.

It is indeed truly amazing how even the smallest things fit into the great puzzle and the big picture of the cosmos. Indeed, everything, in its own way, is significant. The River of the Soul, with its many tributaries, flows in so many ways. Truly, God is everything and eternity, and from His word is everything and eternity created. One could say that, because of this, nothing ever begins. Therefore, nothing ever ends. There are yet many stories to be told, however, even though they do make up part of such an eternity. Yes, many stories there are, great adventures such as this. Everything and every story is significant, for they all are a part of the whole.

Let us search now along the path of dreams for the gateway to the Nowhere dimension. Our thoughts are quickly received by the dreamscape and manifested as swirling strands of living energies. The energies then unleash some of the magic of the dreamscape, which then summons up a door, as if out of nowhere! Even nowhere is a point in space! Even nowhere is somewhere! Everything is a part of infinity.

Like travelers setting foot in an unfamiliar land, we must stand and take in our surroundings for a few seemingly timeless moments. Let us breathe deeply, as thoughts of adventure run through our minds and feelings of excitement fill our hearts. For a dimension in-between physical and spiritual, it is captivating. It seems to be diametrically opposed to the dreamscape in its concept. It is just one flat dimension, representing only itself, over and over. Some would say it is an anomaly of creation. Of course, we know better. The magic of the spirit makes everything possible!

This place seems to demonstrate the mathematical concept of a plane. There is about a square mile of landscape that continuously and infinitely repeats itself, as if planned that way. A compass would be useless in this place. Nowhere has become a very real somewhere. Even "nowhere" is a point in space. We are not where we were before, but somewhere else, in this elsewhere of some strange creator's imagination.

This nowhere would also be difficult to map. A map has limits,

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boundaries, and definitions. Here, these are harder to find. That makes it easy to get lost here. There isn't much to get lost among here, however, as everything repeats itself. We could walk any distance in any direction, and get nowhere at all.

In that way, we would always be in the "middle of nowhere". The very idea of time is also rendered useless. There is no change here but the drops of infinite apples from infinite apple trees, swaying of the ubiquitous wind, the swimming of infinite fish in infinite ponds, and the shining rays of an invisible magic sun that lights this plane.

Let us travel to the closest tree. It is not small, being about 20 feet in circumference. Its bark strangely resembles that of a pear tree, but its shape and leaves yet resemble those of a weeping willow. The sight of it swaying in the wind under a cloudless blue sky and amidst sparse yet well-laid out shrubbery is thought provoking, to say the least.

Yet, lo and behold, there is fruit upon its branches! It seems that the Nowhere dimension does provide for not only the mind and introspection, but also for the body and bare necessities! It is obvious that this dimension was planned ahead, and well in advance!

This is the way that the many pages in the Book of Destiny turn, the way that the innumerable streams of the River of the Soul flow. In the end of one adventure we find the beginning of another. They are all connected in the Book of Destiny, the River of the Soul.

A Prose Poem Treatise to Christ

The Holy Spirit, whose grace knows no bounds, gives freely of its knowledge to any mind and heart that will believe and love Him and His only begotten Son, Whom He gave to us, that we might be saved. The knowledge and wisdom given through the spirit gives true sight to the closed eye of the mind, and gives true hearing to the deaf ear of the heart. In this new infusion of life and spirit, a whole life is transformed and given new meaning. God gives to us new life, out of His boundless love for us. God gives to us wonderful new dreams to live out. Such a joy it is to **work** for the Lord!

That is not to say it will be any easier; there will always be struggles while we are in this world. Yet, we must remember that God has put us here to teach and chastise us, as any good father would. We must remain steadfast in our faith in and love for God and one another, as we rely on God to help us, and do according to His will.

Indeed, there are many things that a believer has to go through to succeed in this world. Fortunately, all we have to do to succeed in Heaven is believe and love. It's a sad, bitter fact that the world does not, and can not, boast such a thing, for the world is given to human nature, to the weakness of the flesh. This weakness is the beginning of our problems, as temptation and cruel emotions are often hard to resist acting upon.

Truly, those who listen only to the flesh are foolish and ignorant. There are many temptations hurled upon it by the forces of evil, the dark beings in constant spiritual war with the forces of good, to gain way into your soul. Since almost the Beginning, it has been such ignorance that has caused unending strife for the believers and the workers of the faith. Too many times, people envy, fear, even hate what is different from them, or what they do not understand.

The most notable example of this, of course, was the life of Christ, God's only Son. Any worldly-minded person would look down upon His life, calling it poor and without much means. Yes, Christ was born in a manger, but of what use is such a fact in determining a man's worth, especially a man such as Jesus? Jesus was neither poor, nor without means, for God always provided all He needed to fulfill His task. He would provide for us as well if we would have faith, and be willing to put in time and effort.

Nonetheless, it was even His own people that crucified Him upon the cross. Yet, Jesus touched more lives than any other man could ever hope to. In life, Jesus worked many great miracles, and healed many people. Any lost person willing to open their hearts was won over by His beautiful messages about God's boundless grace and love. In death, Jesus gave Himself for us, that we might live. Yes, there is unending beauty in not only God's Word, but also His acts of love. It is the example of Christ that we should always look up to and try to live up to.

We must always remember that the enemy is not the person standing in front of us, but the principalities and powers that rule this world. We must keep our wits, and our faith, about us in our battles for good, and God will make sure that we win, for He has conquered this world, indeed, the entire cosmos, already. God Himself

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is our greatest ally, and is always ready to provide for any in need. All we have to do is believe, and do His will with dedication and love and truth. To believe in God and give yourself unto Him and His great kingdom of the spirit is to know that all of your battles are already won! All of this, and then Heaven to look forward to! Who else could ask for more in life? Let us praise God for all He has given us!

But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:

For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

- Matthew 6:20-21

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

The author is a native of Lake City, SC, a longtime karateka, and teacher with a heart of ninjatic love. He lives with two impossible cats and dates the most amazing woman in the world.

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